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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this curriculum unit is to deconstruct stereotypes about Mexico and Mejicano/a people through the study of history, literature, and social realities. The curriculum unit is aimed at secondary humanities teachers and would be appropriate for team teaching. It includes a pre-unit and post-unit lesson, and 10 lessons that focus on stereotypes about Mexico and Mejicano/as. There are correlating realities for each stereotype, and each lesson includes suggested activities for class, small group, and individual student work. There are literary resources at the end of each unit lesson, many of which are short stories or poems that support either the stereotype or the reality, and which provide students with diverse perspectives from Mejicano/a authors. The first stereotype in the unit includes the author/educator's response in its reality section. A short response is included for the other nine stereotypes but students come to their own sense of reality through the activities, literature, and further reflection. Teachers or students can use their journey through the stereotype as a springboard to write and share an expository reality of their own. (BT)

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Stereotypes and Realities: Mexico and Mejicano/as

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Curriculum guide based on research from the
Fulbright-Hays Study Abroad Program to Mexico,
Summer of 2002

Audience: Humanities Educators, Grades 7-12
Literary sources are appropriate for these grades, but teachers are encouraged to pre-read sources. Sources with commonly known grade levels are listed as such.

Purpose:
The main purpose of this unit is to deconstruct stereotypes about Mexico and Mejicano/a people through history, literature, and social realities.

Educators have a social responsibility to facilitate discussions of stereotypes and realities into their classrooms. Through the fusion of history and literature, all students will be introduced to fuller experiences of Mejicano/a people, both in Mexico and the U.S.A., preparing further for their diverse world. Students of Mexican descent will be able to identify themselves with the world around them. History will take on more meaning when paired with the personal experiences shared in literature. Students will develop critical thinking skills as well as a hunger for regional and global perspectives.

People of Mexican heritage and culture have contributed to the culture and growth of the United States for hundreds of years. There are over 20 million Mejicana/o people living in the United States; Hispanic or Latino people in the U.S. comprise 12.5% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). That percentage continues to grow. As educators, we must recognize and validate the contributions of all members of our society.

Mexico as a country has many connections with the U.S.: our shared history (European-Indigenous relations, the slave trade, and wars), our shared geography (natural resources and *la frontera*), and our current trade and labor relations. On both sides of the border, schools have the opportunity to introduce the poignancy of relationships between the United States of Mexico and the United States of America.

It is imperative to foster peace with our neighbors, both neighbors down the street and our global neighbors, and to view each other as valuable assets to our shared community. In order to accomplish these goals, we must learn more about each other and about our history. Chicana/o and Mejicana/o

Literature has created a new venue for learning about the culture and history of Mexico and its people.

Unit Summary

This curriculum guide is created for secondary humanities teachers. It would be a wonderful unit to team-teach. This guide covers components of social studies, it teaches the value of perspective through literature, and it fosters discussion about the dangers of stereotyping in students' personal lives. Information in this unit guide has been gathered from lectures and observations during my time in Mexico this past summer and also from research done before and after the trip.

The guide includes a pre-unit and post-unit lesson, as well as ten lessons that focus on different stereotypes about Mexico and Mejicano/as. There are correlating realities for each stereotype, and each lesson also has suggested activities for class, small group, or individual student work.

There are literary resources at the end of each lesson, many of which are short stories or poems that support either the stereotype or the reality (short stories and poetry are both surrounded by quotation marks, but I have written the word poetry in parenthesis after poetic literary resources). These literary resources are invaluable, as they provide students with diverse perspectives from Mejicano/a authors. The additional resources are for teacher use, to gain more background on the subject at hand, and perhaps to pull more material for the classroom.

After the first stereotype, its reality section includes my own response. For the other nine stereotypes, I included a short response, but students will come to their own sense of "reality" through the activities, literature, and further reflection. Teachers or students could use their journey through the stereotype as a springboard to write and share an expository "reality" of their own.

Topics Covered

1. Stereotype: All Mejicano/as are *mestizo*, a mixed race of Spanish and Indigenous ancestors.

   Topic: Ethnic origins of Mejicano/as (especially *mestizo* and Indigenous populations)
2. Stereotype: All Mejicano/as are Catholic.

   Topic: Religion (Catholic and Indigenous Religions)
3. Stereotype: All people who live in or near the U.S.A. should speak English.

   Topic: The Spanish Language
4. Stereotype: Women are inferior to men in Mexican culture.

   Topic: Gender relations and societal expectations
5. Stereotype: The Old World brought civilization to the New World.

   Topic: Indian Civilization (pre-European encounter, "PreHispanic Period")
6. Stereotype: The only contribution that we have today from Mexico is the taco.

   Topic: Indigenous/Spanish/Mexican contributions
7. Stereotype: The main passage of immigration from Mexico to the U.S.A. is by swimming across the Rio Grande.

   Topic: Diaspora to the U.S.A. (major waves)
8. Stereotype: Mexicans in the U.S.A. are illegal immigrants.

   Topic: Immigration policies, procedures, statistics, and rights
9. Stereotype: NAFTA and Mexico's democracy benefits all of Mexico.

   Topic: Government, democracy, and NAFTA
10. Stereotype: Mexicans are taking all good U.S. jobs.

    Topic: Employment and economics (Mexico and the U.S.A.)

Unit Timeline

This unit should be integrated within the curriculum at the teacher's discretion (at minimum one class period per stereotype, unless the teacher divides the stereotypes into ten different projects for small student groups). It will hold more value if taught within the regular curriculum and not as a separate unit.

More suggestions for literature teachers:

- Align the activities with graduation standards for your state. For instance, pairing fiction and non-fiction reading and focusing on perspective are common standards.

Alternate timeline

- Pre-unit lesson
- Lesson on one stereotype that bests coincides with a pre-selected piece of Mejicana/o or Chicana/o literature.
- Post-unit lesson

More suggestions for social studies teachers:

- Align the activities with graduation standards for your state. Many activities listed here could fall under graduation standards for world cultures, diverse perspectives, or possibly case studies.
- Mirror this unit and teach it in a similar fashion with other countries.
- Add a stereotype and activities about technology in Mexico to fulfill the fifth part of society and social studies (CREPT: culture, religion, economics, politics, and technology, a technique borrowed from Tim Anderson of the Bloomington Jefferson High School Social Studies Department, Bloomington, Minnesota).

Notes about language and semantics

Terms for People

In this guide, I mostly will use the term *Mejicano/a* when referring to people living in Mexico. Some sources use this spelling to aid in pronunciation. Francisco J. Santamaria, editor of *Diccionario de Mejicanismos*, reports that "Mexicano" refers to one of the seven Náhuatl-speaking tribes, and that "Mejicano" refers to citizens of the Republic of Mexico or to things pertaining to them (Shorris' Latinos, p. 494).

Most people within the three largest groups of Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. prefer to be called by their specific cultural name: *Cubano/as, Mejicano/as or Mexicano/as,* or *Puertoriqueño/as (*or, in author Gloria Anzaldúa's case, she defines herself as a Tejana Chicana).

The general term *Latino/a* refers to people from a Latin American culture. The term *Hispanic* refers to a culture with a connection to Spain; many Mejicano/as

do not have a close connection with Europe, so that term will not be used in this curriculum guide.

The term *Chicano/a* refers to citizens or residents of the U.S.A. who have Mexican ancestry. Chicano/a can also be a political term. However, any reference to the term *Chicano/a* in this guide will refer to people living in the U.S. who have Mexican, or possibly mixed, ancestry.

Indigenous/Indian/specific tribal names

Of course, using a specific tribe's name is the most culturally responsive way to introduce a new culture to students. However, I may also use the terms *Native people, Indigenous people* or the term *Indian* when talking about the people who are indigenous to the North American continent. In Mexico, the most commonly used term for indigenous people, with the exception of specific tribes, is *Indian.*

The *o/a* ending

I believe it is important to use both the masculine and feminine endings of adjectives describing a people, in order to be inclusive of the gender of people. If a noun following the adjective is feminine, the ending will read *a/o.* If the noun is masculine, the ending will read *o/a.* The plural adjective will read *a/os* or *o/as.*

Genres of Literature

In talking about literature, I will try to use the terms as preferred by the authors in this guide.

Mejicana/o or Mexicana/o literature:	Mexico as the author's country of origin
Chicana/o literature:	The U.S.A. as the author's current residence or country of origin, with cultural roots in Mexico.
Latina/o literature:	Latin America or Latin American culture as the author's origin.

One more term

transculturation: The creation of a custom or cultural nuance through the meeting of two or more distinct cultures.

Suggested Resources to Review Prior to Unit

Kanellos, Nicolas. The Hispanic-American Almanac: A Reference Work on Hispanics in the United States. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1993. (Grades 7-12).

"Recommended and Not Recommended Books About Latinas/os for Young Readers."
Multicultural Review, 2 (December 1994): 30-34.

Sinnott, Susan. Extraordinary Hispanic Americans. Chicago: Children's Press, 1991. (Grades 6-8).

Schon, Isabel. A Bicultural Heritage: Themes for the Exploration of Mexican and Mexican-American Culture in Books for Children and Adolescents. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1978.

Tatum, Charles, ed. Mexican American Literature. San Diego: Harcort Brace Javanovich. 1990.

Telgen, Diane, ed. Notable Hispanic American Women. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc. 1993. (Grades 9-12).

Please search the internet and bookstores for the most current anthologies of: Mexican/Mexican American/Mejicano/Mejicana/Mexicano/Mexicana/ Latino/Latina/Chicano/Chicana Literature.

Stereotypes and Realities: Mexico and *Mejicano/as*

Pre-Unit Lesson

- Assessing Prior Knowledge
- Defining Stereotypes

Opening activity:
With large pieces of butcher paper, create seven posters with the following topics at the top of each paper:

- Mexico
- Mexicans in Mexico
- Mexicans in the U.S.A.
- The Spanish language
- Mexican immigration
- Native Americans
- NAFTA

With the paper divided in half, write the following two questions:

- What do you know?
- What stereotypes do you have?

Hang each piece of paper around the room before students arrive.
When they arrive, answer the following questions in small or large group:

1. Define stereotype. What are some stereotypes students face in school? What stereotypes do students face outside of school? How are stereotypes related to discrimination?

2. Define prior knowledge. Where does prior knowledge come from? Is it possible to learn something in school that is not true from a different perspective?

3. Define perspective and discuss point of view.

4. Is it possible for a person to write down a stereotype but not to *believe* the stereotype? (This is important to address before the activity, as students will probably start taking offense as they see stereotypes in writing on the paper.)

   After the discussion, review ground rules for the class and add others as needed for this activity or unit (suggested list at end of this lesson).
   Give each student a marker, so that they can rotate and fill in responses at each station. After the paper has been filled, call the class back to large group.

5. Back in large group, look around the room at the responses. Have students read responses aloud, and give students time to discuss both the stereotypes and the prior knowledge. How do we know what we know? What do students hope to learn through this unit?

Stereotypes and Realities: Mexico and Mejicano/as

Pre-Unit Wrap-up

This is a journal activity to be used for personal reflection of the day's activities and discussions. Please respond in your journal to the following comments and question:

Talking about stereotypes can raise some tense emotions inside of us. Chances are, someone has stereotyped us. Chances greater still, we have stereotyped someone else. Many people in this world stereotype or discriminate against us because of what we look like, how we speak, where we come from, or how we dress.

Describe a situation when you felt stereotyped or discriminated against. How did you feel? Why is it important that people treat you as an individual?

Definitions
Culture: The shared values, norms, traditions, customs, arts, and history of a group of people.
Stereotype: An oversimplified generalization of a group of people, without thinking of individuals.
Prejudice: A negative opinion or judgement about a whole group of people and its individual members.
Discrimination: The way people act, based on prejudiced feelings, that denies others equality.

Suggested Ground Rules for Activities about Stereotypes

- Risk taking
- RESPECT (No put-downs)
- Confidentiality
- Right to Pass
- Others?

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PEOPLE AND CULTURE

STEREOTYPE #1
All Mejicano/as are mestizo, a mixed race of Spanish and Indigenous ancestors.

Reality: Out of Mexico's 100 million inhabitants, Mexico is a predominantly mestizo society (approximately 60%). However, Spain was not the only European country to travel and make a home in Mexico. Many other Europeans came as well: Dutch, French, German, and more. In fact, today Mexico is 9% European.

Some Mejicano/as are a mix of Indigenous, European, and African ancestry, especially close to the coasts. African slaves were sent to this lower half of North America, but they could not endure the harsh and frigid work conditions of the mines, so they were "weathered" in Mexico and then many were sold to Cuba and other Caribbean islands. There are very evident physical and cultural traces of Africa in Mexico today.

Even though there are traces of Indigenous ancestry in most Mejicano/as, Indians are probably the most overlooked population in Mexico. Today there remain large Indigenous populations in Mexico. Indigenous people make up 30% of the population in Mexico (Please note: This figure varies between 10% and 30%. From a linguistic perspective, the figure may be at 10%, and from an cultural perspective, 30%). Many of these Indians are not *mestizo* or a mixed race. They have strived to maintain their Indigenous culture, language, and homes from the time of the Spanish conquest through today.

Maintaining culture has not been easy. For instance, at the time of the Columbus encounter, the Indian population in Mexico was 22 million. Similar to the rest of North America, in addition to weapons, disease, and slavery, Europeans made use of false Indigenous alliances to conquer both people and land (use of the Aztecs versus other tribes). Between 1492 and 1590, the Indian population decreased to 2 million.

Contemporary Indigenous people continue to suffer discrimination. They are often the poorest people to live in any given state or town. Most Indigenous people are not integrated into the rest of Mexican culture. Nationally, there is scarce political representation of Indigenous voice' for instance, there are no Indigenous people on the Supreme Court.

However, the awareness and commitment to improving life for Indigenous populations, in Mexico and around the world, is growing. In the southern states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Indians are active and growing political participants. In Oaxaca there are 570 voting *municipios*, and those positions are filled with a 40% Indian majority. The political participation of Indian women, especially compared to other areas of Mexico, is increasing. Indigenous

tribes continue to fight for their rights concerning natural resources and land ownership today.

Research for students: What is the reality about Indians in Mexico?

1. Are all Mexicans *mestizo* (mixed European and Indian ancestry)?

2. What are the largest recognized tribes in Mexico? Name at least three tribes, their language, and their current living environment (which may be a diaspora).

3. What are some current political issues that concern Indians in Mexico?

4. Which two states hold the highest Indian population?

5. Extension: Do you think that all Mexicans know their ethnic heritage? Do you?

6. Extension: Does a person's ethnic background always determine his or her culture? Talk to the people in your class. Find some examples of people who practice the culture of their ethnicity. Find some examples of people who practice the culture of part of their ethnicity. Find some examples of people who practice the culture of another ethnicity.

Answers

1. No.

2. Number of languages: Over ninety individual languages
   Here are a few tribes, their languages, and where they reside (mostly)

Tribe names:	Language:	Living environment:
Aztec (general)	Náhuatl	15 states in Mexico
Maya	Maya	SE (Yucatan to Chiapas)
Zapotec	Zapotec	eastern Oaxaca
Mixtec	Mixtec	Oaxaca and Guerrero
Otomí	Otomí	central Mexico (Mexico, Hidalgo, and Queretaro)
Tzeltal	Tzeltal	Chiapas
Tzotzil	Tzotzil	Chiapas

3. Current political issues (answers will vary): Land ownership, use of natural resources, using Indigenous languages in schools, political participation.

4. Chiapas and Oaxaca (Oaxaca has sixteen different Indian languages, most of whom are Zapotec and Mixtec. The state of Oaxaca has the most diverse linguistic pattern in Mexico.)

5. (Students may need to go home to ask parents or grandparents about their ethnicity. Remember, students relatively new to this continent *may* know their lineage, especially compared to people who have been living in the

Southwest U.S. and Mexico, who may have been there for well over 500 or 600 years! Students should do the best they can.)

6. (Prompts: Does anyone of German descent eat sauerkraut? Does anyone of Laotian descent celebrate the Lao New Year? Does anyone of mixed descent follow the customs of a certain ethnicity? Does anyone not from Jamaica listen to reggae? Did anyone grow up in a household where their ethnicity is different from the culture in which they grew up?)

Literary Resources

My Father Was a Toltec by Ana Castillo

Not By the Sword by Nash Candelaria

Among the Volcanoes by Omar Castañeda

"La Prieta" by Gloria Anzaldúa

Additional Resources

Anatomy of a Movement: The Zapatistas. Atlanta, GA: Project South. 2001. *www.projectsouth.org*

Mihesuah, Devon A. American Indians: Stereotypes & Realities. Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press, Inc. 1996.

Ortiz, Teresa. Never Again A World Without Us: Voices of Mayan Women in Chiapas, Mexico. Washington, DC: Epica. 2001. *www.epica.org*

www.oaxaca.gob.mx

STEREOTYPE #2
All Mexicans are Catholic.

Reality: Mexico is a predominantly Catholic country. However, many Catholic customs and holidays practiced in Mexico are unique because of the transculturation of Catholic and Indigenous religion and traditions. How Mexican Catholics practice their faith is often very different from Catholics in other parts of the world.

Student Activity: Critical Thinking
In small groups, select one of the following Mexican holidays or traditions to research (or research one not listed below). Each has certain traits that are Catholic *and* Indigenous.

- What details do you think came from a Catholic or Spanish tradition?
- What details came from an Indian religious tradition (often based on the *cosmos*, or nature)?
- What might have stemmed from both cultures (transculturation)?

Model:

Día de la Raza Day of Our Race, October 12

This is a day to celebrate mixed heritage, of both Spanish and Indigenous roots. It serves as the flip side of Columbus Day, a day when the lives of American Indigenous people were irreparable changed. Some activities include indigenous dancing, spiritual cleansing, and mask making.

One activity, from the Huicho Indians in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Jalisco, Mexico, is creating the *ojo de dios* (eye of God). The *ojo de dios* takes the shape of a cross, two sticks bound together by yarn that is woven in the shape of a diamond. Because of its shape, some say that it is Christian in origin. However, it is also a symbol of the four directions (north, south, east, and west) or the four elements (earth, fire, water, and air), important to Native religion. You decide!

Because of the day and purpose of Día de la Raza, this celebration focuses on the indigenous part of Mexican culture. Many other holidays have indigenous traditions woven into them, but their origin may not be as obvious or as well known.

More Holidays and Traditions
Día de los Muertes November 1 or 2

Cascarones Celebrated at Eastertime

Cinco de Mayo and *Dies y Seis de Septiembre*

Feliz Navidad y *Día de los Reyes*

Quinceañera Sweet Fifteen (Celebration for girls)

La Boda The Wedding

The Worship of Mary
(In Mexico, The Virgin of Guadalupe serves as a cultural affirmation of Mexico and its Indigenous people. This is a Náhuatl account with Juan Diego, now a patron saint of Mexico, and Bishop Juan Gonzalez de Zumárriga:' The site of this account is as fascinating as its story, because there is such a mix of architecture that is both Catholic and Indigenous.)

Literary Resources

Bless Me, Última by Rudulfo Anaya

Under the Feet of Jesus by Helena María Viramontes

"The Souls in Purgatory" retold by Guadalupe Baca-Vaughn

The Rain God: A Desert Tale by Arturo Islas

Tales of Huitlacoche b Gary Keller

Additional Resources

Menard, Valerie. The Latino Holiday Book. New York: Marlowe & Company. 2000.

STEREOTYPE #3
All people who live in or near the U.S.A. should speak English.

Reality: I am sure that non-native English speakers know the benefits of speaking English better than anyone else. However, I am not sure that native speakers of English know the huge benefits of being bilingual or trilingual.

There are many controversies in the U.S.A. and Mexico about the best way to learn English as well as to maintain Spanish. Bilingual schools are an option in both countries. In Mexico, students learn English as a second language at an early grade. Some Mexican schools are taught completely in English.

Second languages are much easier to learn for children under age 14. Adult brains have a more difficult time learning languages, but with persistence and practice, many adults are successful language learners as well. Because of all the places we hear English (especially the t.v. and radio), many people understand English when they hear it, but they may not have the confidence to speak it as often as they could.

The United States of America has been constructed by so many cultures and languages. The U.S.A. would not be the same if stripped of its language with indigenous or Spanish origin.

> Latinos made their mark on American English a long time ago...It is simply too late for the United States to ban the Spanish language. What would we call the Grand *Canyon*? Or the Sierra Nevada? Arizona, Colorado, California, Florida, Nevada, Montana and New Mexico would have to change their names immediately. If an English-only law were adopted and enforced, the names of so many cities, towns, rivers, roads, mountains, canyons, gullies, washes, creeks, parks, schools, colleges, streets, avenues, boulevards, alleys, highways, airports, lakes, inlets, keys, and bays would have to be changed that the United States would seem to most of us like a foreign country—with no tomatoes [tomatoes are of Aztec origin]."
>
> from Earl Shorris' Latinos (50)

The following activities will help to give students some insight into the difficulties that a language learner might face.

Activities

1. Based on the writing above, from Shorris' book Latinos, create a list of place names in your town or daily vocabulary that may have Spanish or Indigenous North American origin.

2. Decide with a partner what basic conversation you would like to have in Spanish. In pairs, go to the library, to a Spanish teacher at your school, or to another community resource. Learn your basic conversational Spanish skills, and present your conversation to the class.

3. On half of a notebook piece of paper, write the following:

My name is _____.
I do not speak English.
My address is _____
_____
I am going to (insert location here…perhaps a store or a community center)

Pin the paper on your shirt with a safety pin. Find a bench outside somewhere and sit down. Be observant of people's reactions around you. Before going outside, talk as a class about what you will do if someone approaches you to take you somewhere. (I have seen signs like this pinned on people, usually older adults, in airports. The signs usually say what language(s) the person speaks as well.)

4. With your class, research your community to find all locations where English is taught outside of public schools. Make posters to advertise the times, locations, price, and further contact information. Post your advertisements throughout your community. (How will you make your posters? In English? In other languages represented within your community?)

Literary Resources

"*Ciprianita*" by Juanita M. Sánchez (poem)

"White Mice" by Rubén Sálaz-Márquez (fiction, 8th grade)

Mothertongue by Demetria Martínez

"How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldúa

"Linguistic Terrorism" by Gloria Anzaldúa, from Borderlands/*La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

"In a Neighborhood in Los Angeles" by Francisco X. Alarcón (poem, 8th grade)

STEREOTYPE #4
Women are inferior to men in Mexican culture.

Reality: In every culture, males and females take on different roles. For instance, the image of the mother is very important to Mexican culture. PreHispanic Period sculptures depict women who died during childbirth as the strongest and most revered in society. Mary the Virgin Mother and all mothers are highly respected. Mothers are often the people who carry on the traditions of a culture, through food, prayer, and other customs. Celebrations that show this admiration and respect are *Día de Virgen de Gualadupe* and Mother's Day.

Women in Mexico are on the path to a more gender-equitable society. Just as in the U.S.A., there is not equal representation of men and women who serve as leaders of regional or national government. In other occupations, there are still more women in textile and service-based work, and fewer women in administrative positions.

Both Latina and Latino authors speak to the struggles they have had in regard to gender expectations that are part of their daily lives.

For the activity, students are encouraged to read and discuss at least one of the literary resources listed below. Students could also discuss what expectations they feel society places on them because of their gender.

Literary Resources

"Like Mexicans" by Gary Soto

"El Patrón" by Nash Candelaria

"Growing" by Helena María Viramontes

"Only Daughter" by Sandra Cisneros (nonfiction)

"Mother and Daughter" by Gary Soto

"Mi Madre" by Pat Mora (poetry, 8th grade)

"Epiphany: The Third Gift" by Lucha Corpi

Additional Resources

Anzaldua, Moraga, Eds. This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press. 1983.

Galindo, D. Letticia and Gonzales, Maria Dolores, Eds. Speaking Chicana. University of Arizona Press. 1999.

Gonzales, Ray. Muy Macho: Latino Men Confront Their Manhood. New York: Doubleday Press. 1996.

Salas, Elizabeth. Soldaderas in the Mexican Military. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. 1990.

HISTORY

STEREOTYPE #5
The Old World brought civilization to the New World.

Reality: The Indians of Mexico were very civilized prior to the Spanish encounter. Their cultures were different from those of Europeans.

Activity
Select something from the PreHispanic Period to research. As a class, create a small museum gallery with visual aids and written descriptions of the visuals. Visual aids may include artwork or smaller-than-life models.

Partial list of suggestions from the PreHispanic Period

- The Mayan written language
- Mayan pyramids
- Mayan calendar
- Mayan mathematical systems
- *Glifas* (storytelling)
- *La Quemada* (the premier city in MesoAmerica)
- Aztec pyramid-shaped temples
- Aztec canals and bridges
- Aztec ball courts
- Aztec urban designs
- Aztec bathing habits (considerably more than Europeans)
- Elaborate hairstyles
- Clothing
- Jewelry
- Medicinal practices
- Spiritual practices and beliefs

Literary Resources

"The Other Pioneers" by Roberto Féliz Salazar (poem, 8th grade)

The Moths and Other Stories by Helena Maria Viramontes

STEREOTYPE #6
The main contribution that we have today from Mexico is the taco.

Reality: Contributions from Mexico's indigenous biodiversity (the New World) and from Spain (the Old World) have changed and enriched the world.

Activity
Here is a list of plants and animals that can be found either in the New World or in the Old World before the time of the European Invasion on the Americas. Create two columns in your notebook, one for New World and one for Old World. Put the following words in the correct column.

chocolate	milk	cheese	maple syrup
honey	wine	citrus fruits	tuna (nopal)
cows	deer	chili peppers	pigs
goats	pepper	cinnamon	tobacco
ice cream	wheat	beans	gum
garlic	squash	tortillas	olive oil

For teachers:

Old World	New World
cows	chocolate (cacao plant)
milk	maple syrup
cheese	honey
wine	tuna (nopal cactus fruit)
pigs	deer
goats	chili peppers
pepper	tobacco
cinnamon	ice cream
wheat	beans
garlic	squash
olive oil	gum
citrus fruits	tortillas

Extension

1. Create a list of transcultural foods (i.e. hot chocolate is a transcultural food, from the dairy of the Old World and the cacao plant from the New World).

2. What are other Mexican contributions that have reached the U.S.A.? Think about multiple fields of influence: science, mathematics, religion, music, technology, inventions, social studies, literature, sports and leisure, travel, film, and more.

Literary Resources (By *no* means comprehensive of literary contributions)

Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing up Latino in the United States
by Lori Carlson, ed.

The House on Mango Street and other works by Sandra Cisneros (grades 9-12)

Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments, with Recipes, Romances
and Home Remedies by Laura Esquivel

One Hundred Years of Solitude, "The Old Man with Enormous Wings," and other books
and stories by Gabriel García Márquez

Baseball in April and Other Stories and other works by Gary Soto (grades 7-8)

And other works by:

Rudolfo Anaya

Gloria Anzaldúa

Ana Castillo

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

Carlos Fuentes

Octavio Paz

Helena María Viramontes

Additional Resources
Mexican Literature: A History by David William Foster, ed.

Description of Mexican Literature (Intermediate) at Universidad de Guanajuato
The main goal is to provide students with a general panorama of Mexican Literature with a comprehension of the different levels of its evolution from the PreHispanic period, colonization, independence to the present day. The course is divided into two units that cover the main literary periods and writers.

Unit I : Poetry of Netzahualcoyotl, epistolary tradition of New Spain, Bernardo Díaz del Castillo, Fray Bernardino de Shagún, Los Empeños de una casa and Hombres Necios by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Alfonso Reyes

Unit II: The Mexican Revolution: Los de Abajo by Mariano Azuela
Magic Realism: Nos han dado la tierra and Pedro Páramo by Juan Rulfo,
Muerte sin Fin by José Gorostiza
Works by Octavio Paz: Los hijos del limo and La Libertad bajo palabra
Elena Poniatowska: La noche de Tlatelolco
Carlos Fuentes: Aura
Armando Ramírez: Chin Chin el te porocho

HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

STEREOTYPE #7
The main passage of immigration from Mexico to the U.S.A. is by swimming across the Rio Grande.

Reality: In addition to people of Mexican heritage who have lived here before the U.S.A. was a country, and while it was forming, there have been three major waves of Mejicano/a immigration to the U.S.A. In history, people have passed through shallow sections of the Rio Grande to enter the U.S.A., but it is by no means a main passageway from one country to the other.

"We're not undocumented people; we're from here. We have no work, 60 percent of the people are unemployed. Why is the government spending money to discover the moon, which is a piece of stone in the sky?
-Carmen Anaya (schoolteacher, orator, and business woman)
from Earl Shorris' Latinos (298)

Activity
Immigration History: When and Why?
In pairs or small groups, have students select one of the research topics under the "When" or the "Why" categories (current topics of immigration will be covered in the next lesson). Divide the class into two sections; one section will write newspaper articles for a Mexican paper, and one will write for a U.S. paper.

"La Frontera" (Student newspaper)

You will be divided into two groups; half of you will be working for a Mexican newspaper, and half will be working for a U.S. newspaper. Using your research, write a contribution for a newspaper that covers basic information about your topic (who, what, when, where, why, and how). A contribution could be a lead article, a political cartoon, obituaries, an opinion section, etc. Appoint an editor, a layout person, writers, and other newspaper tasks. Make sure that each person has a job and that each topic is represented.

Be sure that every section has a title. Keep in mind that people from *both* countries will have varying points of view about immigration. The final product will be two newspapers from the mid-to-late 1800s and early 1900s.

When?

A. 1848 California Gold Rush
1857, 1859 Mexico Race Wars
U.S. Civil War

B. 1906 Depression in the Mexican economy
1910 Mexican Revolution

C. 1920 Farming opportunities in California, Texas, and the Southwest

Why?

- HUMAN LABOR
- Greater wages
- Less oppressive conditions (trying to escape poverty, hunger, debt, and classism)
- Trying to escape *Hacendados* (Mexican plantation owners), who wanted a clause in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to return fugitive workers from the U.S.A.)
- Labor boom with war efforts (Civil War, WWI)
- Cattle industry boom during the Reconstruction, with cattle drives like the Chisholm Trail
- Transportation (railroads of the 1870s)
- No set or effective boundary separating Mexico and the U.S.A. during the 1800s.

Literary Resources

Y no se lo tragó la tierra/...And the Earth Did Not Part by Tomás Rivera

"Oranges" by Gary Soto (poem)

"Crossing the Border" by Miguel Torres

"Federico's Ghost" by Martín Espada (poem)

"Everybody Knows Tobie" by Daniel Garza (fiction, 9th grade)

"The Horned Toad" by Gerald Haslam (fiction, 8th grade)

Carlota by Scott O'Dell (non-Latino, grades 6-8)

The Crossing by Gary Paulsen (non-Latino, grades 6-8)

Additional Resources

Shorris, Earl. Latinos: A Biography of the People. New York: Norton. 1992.

Takaki, Ronald. A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America. New York: Back Bay Books. 1993.

Zinn, Howard. A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present. New York: HarperCollins. 1999.

Additional Resource for Grades 6-10

Fernandez-Shaw, Carlos. The Hispanic Presence in North America from 1402 to Today. New York: Facts on File. 1991.

STEREOTYPE #8
Mexicans in the U.S.A. are illegal immigrants.

Reality: Most people of Mexican descent in the United States are not immigrants, they are citizens. Many Mejicano/as who *are* immigrants in the U.S.A. came here legally. Did you know that at one time there was no immigration/migration policy between either country? There is much to learn about immigration and naturalization to the United States of America!

"Ningún ser humano es illegal." (No human being is illegal.)
Slogan of the campaign to gain political asylum for Central American refugees. Taken from Earl Shorris' Latinos (259).

Activities

1. Create a glossary of the following terms (list is not comprehensive): Legal, illegal, resident, alien, immigrant, migrant, naturalized, citizen, refugee, green card, visa, passport, INS, The Border Patrol, *cholos*, border rats, wetbacks, *esse*.

   Key to some terms

border rats	Derogatory term, referring to people who live along the Mexican border (usually on the U.S. side)
cholos	Bandits or people hired to rob or kill undocumented people
esse	Person of Mexican descent, usually male
wetbacks	Derogatory term for Mejicano/as, referencing people who crossed the Rio Grande with their belongings on their backs.

2. Go on-line and print off the U.S. Citizenship interview and test. All students should study the100 questions possible for the citizenship test and quiz each other. They will be surprised at what they don't know (when taking the actual test, people are generally asked 12 questions, taken from the 100 questions).

3. Select a scenario below (or create more of your own). Search the website for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, and come up with the proper forms and anything else you will need in order to obtain your goal. Answer the scenario questions below.

Who you are	*Wealth*	*Relatives in the U.S.*	*Goal*
Father (has two children and a wife in Coahuila)	Nothing in the bank	No one	Go to work in a factory for as long as possible. Could maybe commute.
Family from Guadalahara (two children, two parents)	Has $100,000 pesos in the bank	Father has a job offer to work in Michigan.	Work in the U.S., possibly stay there long enough to obtain citizenship if desired.
Male student, 21 years old	Nothing in the bank, could get a loan if necessary	No relatives, but has a girlfriend in the U.S.	Wants to spend the summer with his girlfriend in Chicago (3.5 months).
34 year old female with one child (husband passed away)	Has $5,000 pesos in the bank	Has a sister who lives in the U.S. as a permanent resident.	Wants to live in Santa Fe with her sister's family.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Scenario questions:

A. Is it possible to obtain your goal?
B. What else do you need in order to obtain your goal?
C. If it is not possible to obtain your goal, what is possible?
D. How long do you think this process might take?

Extended Thinking

4. Many Mejicano/as have access to this information on the internet (There were more internet cafes in Mexico than I have seen in any given city in the U.S.A.). If someone did not have access to the internet, how do you think he or she might obtain that information?

5. What is required for citizens of the U.S.A. to visit, work, or live in Mexico?

6. What immigration/migration policy does the U.S.A. and Canada have?

7. Why do you think Mexico, Canada, and the U.S.A. have different policies for immigration and migration?

Literary Resources

"The Iguana Killer" by Alberto Alvaro Rios

"Immigration Law" by Margaret Randall

"The Concrete River" and "Then Comes a Day" by Juis J. Rodríguez
poetry from Poetry Like Bread, M. Espada, ed. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press. 1994.

Immigrants in Our Own Land by Jimmy Santiago Baca (poetry)

Additional Resources

www.ins.gov Official U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service site

www.thecenterweb.org/adult/pdfs/draftins.pdf General interview from INS

www.immigration.com/citizenship/questions.html Citizenship Q & A

www.heraldsun.com/votebook/citizenship/citstart.html On-line quiz

*Beware of falsified or money-hungry immigration/citizenship sites!

CURRENT LABOR AND TRADE RELATIONS

STEREOTYPE #9
NAFTA and Mexico's democracy benefits all of Mexico.

Reality: According to economics and government scholars who spoke to our group throughout different regions in Mexico, NAFTA most benefits commercial and corporate businesses, often found in the north of the country. Other aspects of NAFTA are potentially oppressive rural areas, small, independent businesses, or subsistence land use, such as in the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. The democratic government of Mexico is at a new beginning to representing the needs of its people.

Topics to Research
- NAFTA
- Maquiladoras
- Labor laws
- Unemployment and the informal economy
- Imports and exports (Mexico and U.S.A.)
- Presidente Vicente Fox
- Main political parties: PRI, PRD, PAN

STEREOTYPE #10
Mexicans who will work for are taking all good U.S. jobs cheap.

Reality: Before and after NAFTA, labor has been a driving force of Mexican immigration to the U.S.A. However, many Mejinano/as are still subjected to the lowest paying, most unreliable jobs and the worst working conditions, in both countries. Economics and immigration are very closely linked.

Topics to Research
- Demographics/Population growth
- Urbanization
- Industrialization
- Labor Market (underemployed, seat shops, poor income distribution)
- Migration
- Consumption of Resources (air, land, water, and energy)

Additional Resources

Distant Neighbors by Alan Riding

www.nafta-sec-alena.org NAFTA (entire document, English, Spanish, or French)

www.economia.gob.mx/ Government website on Mexico's economy

Since immigration, labor, and government are so closely related, please see stereotypes #7 and #8 for literary resources.

Stereotypes and Realities: Mexico and *Mejicano/as*

Post-Unit Lesson (2 Days)

- Review of Stereotypes
- Reflection on Learning
- Focus on Action

Day 1

Opening activity

Have students, to the best of their knowledge, complete the self-reflection awareness and action questions adapted from Paul Kivel's book Uprooting Racism (worksheet follows).

Students may realize that after completing this unit on Stereotypes and Realities, there is still much to learn.

Activity

Have students select one of the questions to work on in class and to complete as homework for the next day.

This would also be a good day for a final unit assessment. Since this unit offers many options for classroom work, the teacher should decide how student work will be assessed (suggestions: a final portfolio, an oral presentation, or list of their own ten stereotypes and realities).

Day 2

Post-Unit Wrap-up

Students should report back to the group on their findings from yesterday's questions.

Select a couple of questions to talk about as an entire group. Reflect upon the following:

1. What can we do as individuals to be more culturally responsive?
2. What can we do as a group of friends to not stereotype people?
3. What can we do as a class?
4. What can we do as a school?
5. What can we do in our family?

Activity

Have students complete and sign the "Commitment to Grow" handout.

Additional Activities

There is a worksheet here created to go with Teaching Tolerance's A Place at the Table curriculum. Teachers may order the entire curriculum for free or low-cost.

Contact:
TEACHING TOLERANCE
400 WASHINGTON AVE.
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104
334.264.3121 FAX
www.teachingtolerance.org

Post-Unit Lesson: Questions for Awareness and Action
adapted from Paul Kivel's Uprooting Racism

1. Which Spanish-speaking people live in your town, city or rural area?
2. Which Spanish-speaking people provide work near you and benefit the economy (including farm workers, low-wage manufacturing workers or workers in factories near the Mexican border)?
3. What do you gain and what do you lose when these workers are poorly paid, work in unsanitary conditions, are exposed to dangerous chemicals and have unsafe working conditions?
4. What social problems are Spanish-speaking groups blamed for?
5. How well are Spanish-speaking communities represented in your local governments?
6. Are there good support services for Spanish-speaking families and Spanish-speaking youth in your area? How could you find out?
7. How have the histories of U.S. involvement with Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico and El Salvador influenced the treatment of immigrants who arrived here from those countries?
8. How have stereotypes of Latino/as helped prepare for or justify invasions and control of South and Central American countries?
9. Have you been involved with Spanish-speaking communities close to your home? How might you become involved?
10. Did your foreparents speak a native language that has been lost in your family or community? What are other losses in a monolingual community?
11. English is now used internationally to communicate. How is this an advantage to us? How is it a disadvantage to us?
12. How does the role of English in the world affect people whose primary language is not English?
13. Do you speak Spanish? If not, what might be reasons for learning Spanish? Why haven't you learned Spanish in the past?

COMMITMENT TO GROW

As I learn about what stereotyping and discrimination means,
I make the following commitments:

I will stop...
(Describe behaviors that you will STOP that discriminate against another.)

1.

2.

3.

I will start...
(Describe behaviors that you will START that are useful to honoring diversity or striving for equity.)

1.

2.

3.

I will continue...
(Describe behaviors that you will CONTINUE that are useful in furthering your growth in diversity and equity.)

1.

2.

3.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Adapted by A. Lindesmith © 2002
from Yvette A. Hyate-Adams, Goddard College Spring Residency 2002

Name: _____
Date: _____

Chapter No. 8: A Tale of Two Schools

Objective: You will discover how Mexican Americans fought school segregation in California at the same time that African Americans were fighting the same problem in other parts of the country.

Vocabulary *Using the text that you read, define each of the following.*

1. "Americanization":
2. Anglo:
3. Chicano/a:
4. Class Action Suit:
5. Colonia:
6. Latino/a:
7. Naturalized:

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the economy of Westminster, Calf., in the 1940s.

2. What were the schools like at that time?

3. How did officials determine which school a child would attend?

4. How did the Mendezes respond to the school system's discrimination against their children?

5. Who was Thurgood Marshall, and what is his connection to the Mendez story?

a)

b)

6. Fighting segregation in the Westminster schools was a family effort for the Mendezes and their neighbors. Has your family ever "rallied" around a cause or a problem that you wanted to solve? For what issue would you be willing to make the kind of sacrifices the Mendezes made?

a)

b)

Writing Assignments
Select one assignment from the Teacher's guide. Write 1-2 pages.

Project Ideas
Also in the Teacher's guide. Select a project and complete it with a partner.

Answers for this worksheet can be found in the Teacher's guide for
A Place at the Table, written by Teaching Tolerance.
www.teachingtolerance.org

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